

## BE6010 - Oxford Museums visit -10<sup>th</sup> December 2018

### *'Artefacts that tell stories'*

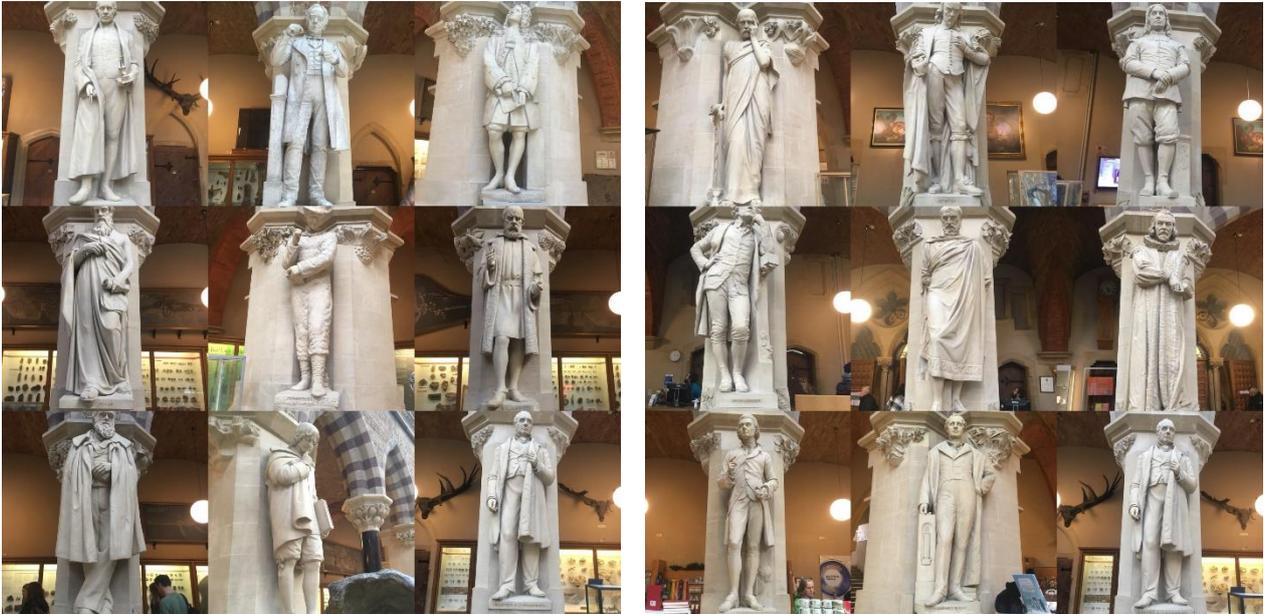


Artefacts carry an array of stories. Where do they come from? Who made them? Who used them? What do they do? How did they come to be at the museum? These are clearly rich stimuli for developing imagination and storytelling skills. Consider the prompts below to plan a writing session for young writers centering on chosen artefacts found in the museums...

- Spend time looking carefully at both museums' collections.
- Find an item or artefact that 'speaks to you' in some way and consider how it could be used as a **stimulus** for creative writing with children.
- How / why might this object **inspire** young writers?
- What **genre** of writing / narrative style might it prompt?
- What different language **styles** / **devices** could you introduce?
- If you wish, you could extend this activity to take into account the museums themselves as magical and intriguing settings and stimuli for storytelling (*\*Consider the examples shared in seminars of how writers such as Philip Pullman, Penelope Lively and Milan Trenc have drawn on these sites as settings in their fiction*).
- Following this visit, please email me your ideas ([Bscreech@glos.ac.uk](mailto:Bscreech@glos.ac.uk)), ideally accompanied by a photo of your chosen artefact. We would like to create a shared 'bank' / resource of these and publish them on the department blog.

'Artefacts that tell stories'

Millie Elsdon and Annie Allen



Whilst walking around the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, we spotted a number of figures making up the pillars around the perimeter of the building. Upon closer inspection, we discovered that stood on the pillars around the main court were notable figures from history who have had some significant impact on the world, in particular in the field of science, including Galileo Galilei, George Stephenson, Isaac Newton and Charles Darwin.

This is what we found about the statues on the museum website:

*“A number of eminent scientists, philosophers and engineers are commemorated with statues around the Museum: Aristotle, Galileo, Newton, Darwin and Linnaeus are among the figures that grace the court. Several busts celebrate Oxford men of science that have made a significant contribution to the Museum.”*

We were interested in the statues ourselves, so thought they could provide an interesting stimulus for writing for primary children. We decided to pitch our learning at upper KS2 children, however it is quite an open task, so teachers could adapt it for older/younger children.

Prior to the visit to the museum, we would split the children into small study groups (pairs), and assign each of them a number relating to the statue guide from the museum website \*see below\*

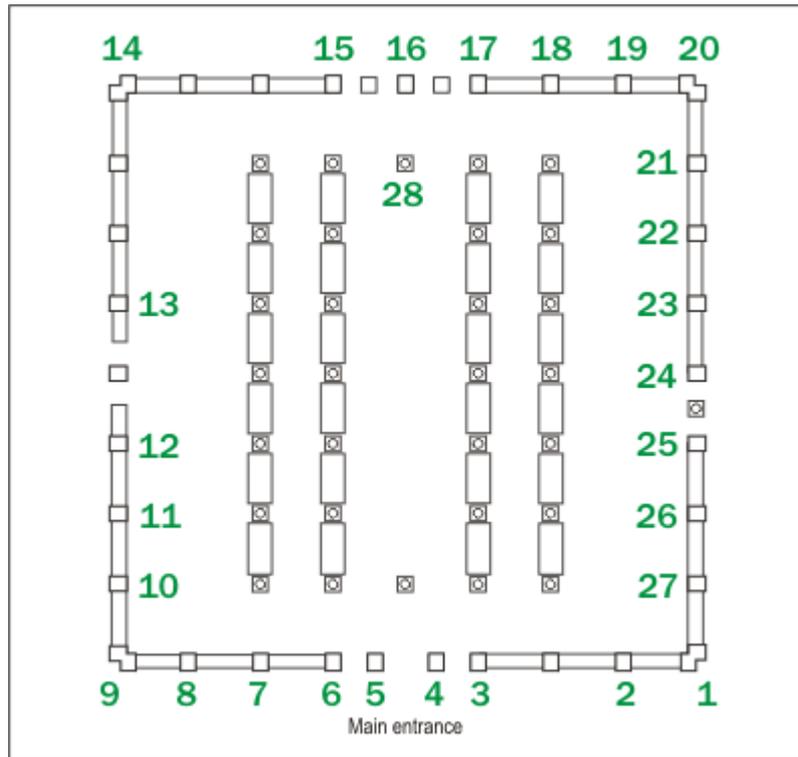


Figure 1: Numbered guide to the statues in the museum

Upon arrival at the museum, each group would go to their statue, and make a note of the name of the figure presented in the statue.

When back in the classroom after the visit, the children would come back together as a class, and each pair would share the name of their figure, and the children would be given the opportunity to discuss whether they recognise any of the names. The teacher would then ask the children *why* they think those figures were displayed around the museum – *at this point the children would hopefully begin to make deductions about the fact that the figures have all made some significant difference to the world.*

The children would then be set the task of writing a non-chronological report on their assigned figure. They would be provided with iPads/computers and books, and the teacher would provide any useful websites for the children to use to find information.

The teacher would recap the conventions of a report, and the children would then spend one lesson researching and gathering information and planning their report. The second lesson would be spent writing up the report, and the final lesson would be an opportunity for all of the children to come back together and share their findings with their peers.

Below are the Year 5 National Curriculum English objectives we would aim to meet with this teaching and learning installation:

plan their writing by:

- identifying the audience for and purpose of the writing, selecting the appropriate form and using other similar writing as models for their own
- noting and developing initial ideas, drawing on reading and research where necessary

draft and write by:

- selecting appropriate grammar and vocabulary, understanding how such choices can change and enhance meaning
- using a wide range of devices to build cohesion within and across paragraphs
- using further organisational and presentational devices to structure text and to guide the reader [for example, headings, bullet points, underlining]

evaluate and edit by:

- assessing the effectiveness of their own and others' writing
- proposing changes to vocabulary, grammar and punctuation to enhance effects and clarify meaning
- ensuring the consistent and correct use of tense throughout a piece of writing
- ensuring correct subject and verb agreement when using singular and plural, distinguishing between the language of speech and writing and choosing the appropriate register
- proofread for spelling and punctuation errors
- perform their own compositions, using appropriate intonation, volume, and movement so that meaning is clear

# Artefacts that tell stories.

Ellie Tetlow



These are Indian and Asian garments for women- bags, pouches and necklaces. These date back to 1908-1922.

When I visit museums or look at artefacts such as these, I always have questions running through my mind- Who used them? Who wore them? How old are they? What did they put in their bag or use their bag for? How did they make them? What was their life like? Did they have a family? Where did they live? What did they do for a living? How was this garment special to that person?

These would be great ideas and questions to explore with children through discussion, which could then be further explored through drama. Children could act out or tell the life of the people who wore these bags and necklaces, building a character profile or simply a piece of storytelling about that imagined person's life using a lot of creative and descriptive language.

After the drama activity, the children could write either a character profile or a story based on their imagined person who owns one of the garments. This means that they would have had chance to orally rehearse their storytelling and use of descriptive language through the speaking and listening within the drama activity before having to write it down.

## How could this object be used to inspire young writers?

Links to the 'story maps' used in the T4W (Talk For Writing) approach.

### Cross-curricular links to History

- Chronology
- Similarities and differences between life in different periods
- Understand some of the ways in which we find out about the past and identify different ways in which it is represented.

**Non-fiction writing** Children to write a museum style description/sign about their story.

### Painted cowhide depicting 'The Life of Many Shots' North America, Canada

The illustrations on this cowhide represent events from the life of Many Shots, who lived on the Blood Indian Reserve in Alberta. Many Shots painted the scenes himself, which show scenes from the thirteen battles he took part in during his lifetime. These 'coup stories' depict various successes, including capturing enemies and their weapons. He also recorded other triumphs such as his wife killing a grizzly bear by hand. Painted records of war deeds like this were worn to proclaim a man's ability and status, and were adapted for the tourist market. This robe was produced for the tourist trade rather than for wear.

### Painted cowhide depicting 'The Life of Many Shots'



Children could retell a story they know well or one they have developed themselves (ability dependent) using drawings.

Explores different ways of 'writing' and story telling before the development of letters/words. (Could also look at cave paintings also found in America).

#### Writing - composition

##### Statutory requirements

Pupils should be taught to:

- develop positive attitudes towards and stamina for writing by:
  - writing narratives about personal experiences and those of others (real and fictional)
  - writing about real events
  - writing poetry
  - writing for different purposes
- consider what they are going to write before beginning by:
  - planning or saying out loud what they are going to write about
  - writing down ideas and/or key words, including new vocabulary
  - encapsulating what they want to say, sentence by sentence
- make simple additions, revisions and corrections to their own writing by:
  - evaluating their writing with the teacher and other pupils
  - re-reading to check that their writing makes sense and that verbs to indicate time are used correctly and consistently, including verbs in the continuous form
  - proof-reading to check for errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation (for example, ends of sentences punctuated correctly)
- read aloud what they have written with appropriate intonation to make the meaning clear.

Children could also present their story in the form of a museum exhibit to the class.



Habiba, Sumaya and Jasmine

**Artefact: Dodo**

**Hook:** Introduce the first chapter of the book 'Dodos are forever' by Dick King-Smith, along with a few extracts from some other chapters. The book tells a story of the extinction of an entire species.

**Activity:** Children go to the Museum and choose an animal that has been extinct. They use the format of King-Smith's novel to write their own version for their chosen extinct animal. The children would be encouraged to write factually accurate information. Methods of writing is creative - this can be through the medium of a sailor/explorer or an chronological adventure report.

## Rachel -Collett - Stimulus for children's creative writing from the Pittrivers museum

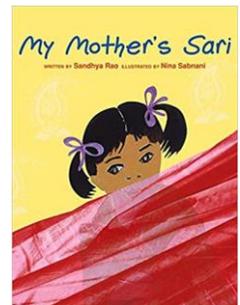
Show the children the **traditional Arab dress**.



- What is it made of? What does it feel like? What colours are used? Who might wear this? Why might they wear it? For special occasions?

Explain that this traditional dress (thōb) is probably from either Ramallah or Bethlehem and likely made around the 1920s-30s. It is made from hand woven natural linen and decorated with distinctive red silk embroidery. The silk would likely have been imported from Syria. The dress shows many of the features of traditional Palestinian costume, including the rich colour of the threads and the square chest panel (Qabbah) with embroidered motifs. These motifs and how they are laid out is significant in traditional Palestinian embroidery, saying a great deal about who made it and where it was from. Specific motifs may refer to family, age, social status or location.

- Read 'My Mother's Sari' by Sandhya Rao (for a read example on youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVqzUTSgCm8>) Explain that the sari described is another special item of clothing but from a *different* culture.
- Emphasise the different ways in which the sari is described. For example, the daughter climbs up it like a rope, hides in it with friends, even wipes her nose on it!



- Prompt the children to think of a piece of clothing that is special to them that they could write a creative piece on or include in their creative piece. Get them to think about why that piece of clothing is special to them and how that could be included in their writing. Think about this item in detail. Is it brand new and in great condition or is it old and worn fraying around the edges? What story does the piece of clothing hold? This item of clothing could be worn by a character in a story or the writing could be to describe the clothing in interesting or unusual ways like 'My Mother's sari' did.
- Share a teacher written example that to set expectations for their work and prompt their ideas.
- My example: My large, soft, red, coat envelops me like a portable sleeping bag. Swathing me in thick cushiony, cottony fabric that protects me from the bleak, biting, winter air. Wrapped up in my knitted hat and gloves, my coat keeps me as warm as if I was sat by a roaring fire. As I tread through the snow coated streets my coat rustles in time with my steps. I bury my face down into its fleecy lining, breathing in the sweet floral scent that I associate with my late Gran. This had been her coat and even traces of her old perfume wash my mind with memories.
- Point out that in this example I described the fabric, the warmth the coat provides, the sound, the smell and what the coat reminds me of. Unpick what is good about this example and what else could be included?
- Following this discussion allow the children to start to plan and write their own creative writing piece about a special item of clothing including the things mentioned that could have been included in the example.